

Article

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3 common home WiFi issues and how to solve them

Conference calls dropping out. Sloooooow speeds. Poor WiFi range... Sound familiar?

With so many of us now working from home, never before has our home connectivity been quite so put to the test!

We've pulled together some fixes for the three most common issues we're hearing about.

How to increase my wifi's range?

- Raise your router up higher – sit it on a shelf perhaps and ensure it's not obstructed too i.e. sitting behind a TV.
- Move your router closer to you or move your workspace closer to the router. The fewer walls and/or obstacles you have between you and the router, the better.
- If the above points don't help or aren't possible, purchase a plug-in range extender.

How to increase my wifi's speed?

- If possible, connect directly to your router using a cable. This removes WiFi from the equation and provided you have a good internet connection, will give you the best performance.
- If a cable connection isn't possible, see above section to help improve the range of your WiFi.
- Go to speedtest.net or fast.com and check you are getting the speeds promised by your provider. Note: upload will be slower than download on residential connections. If you aren't getting the speeds, and if other devices in your house suffer, get in touch with your internet provider for further help.
- Is anyone else in the house downloading or streaming large files? If performance improves when they stop, consider planning around each other in the house.

How to stop my wifi connection from dropping out?

First, determine if the problem is WiFi or internet connection related by plugging a cable directly into your router. If the problem persists with a cable you'll need to contact your internet service provider for help.

If the problem resolves with a cable, the issue could be down to congested WiFi channels, which can occur through heavy internet use.

Although most routers are 'smart' and can auto switch to less congested channels, this doesn't always happen perfectly. Some older routers also won't have this smart function.

To manually switch:

Download and run an SSID* scanner. The purpose of this is to scan your nearby area to determine what 'channels' people are using for their WiFi. The goal is to identify the least used, and therefore least congested channel. On a typical 2.4GHz frequency you're only going to want to use channels 1, 6 and 11.

When you've determined the least congested channel from 1, 6 and 11, log in to your router and make the switch. You should be able to find instructions on how to log into your router on your internet providers website. Most likely this will be by typing in an address made up of numbers into your browser window and inputting your password.

¹*A Wi-Fi network's SSID (Service Set Identifier) is the technical term for its network name e.g. 'Airport-Lounge-Wifi'
